

"PUNCHING THE BALL"

An Easy Method of Reducing Flesh
and Cultivating Speed.

HOW TO HANG AND PUNCH IT

It is a Pleasant Exercise and, in
Addition to Being an Enemy to
Fat, it is a Great Benefit to
the Lungs and Digestion.

Some months ago a wealthy friend of mine who is somewhat of an epicure and was more corpulent than I ought to be. How can I take that weight off without dieting? I am willing to work a bit but I won't deny myself the pleasures of the table." I responded, "Punch the ball!" I responded, "Ball punching is one of the best phys-



ical methods of reducing the weight and improving the wind of fleshy people. When a ball is fought, energetically and persistently, the exercise produces profuse perspiration. Every muscle of the body and limbs is brought into play and there is little or no danger of straining any of them and that is more than can be said of 'pulley lifting,' and many other kinds of gymnastic work. Fat fairly melts away from the regular ball puncher and he obtains nearly all the benefits of sparring without any of its inconveniences, such as bloody noses, black eyes, or bruises." My friend took my advice and bought him a punching ball, fought it every day for fifteen or twenty minutes, according to my advice, and now he tips the scale at twenty pounds lighter than he was and he looks and feels fifty per cent better than he did before he began the exercise.

The "punching ball" of to-day differs very materially from the "fighting bag" which was used in the days of Tom Hyer, Yankee Sullivan, Heenan and Sayers, and even in Joe Cornburn's time. The bag then used was a huge affair, nearly as tall as a man and twice as bulky. It was filled with cotton, oats and such like heavy yielding material until it weighed about what its user's intended opponent was supposed to scale. It was suspended by a rope, from the ceiling in a room so that its center of gravity was a little above its user's shoulders. Naturally, in responding to blows, pushes or shoves it swung slowly and ponderously. The man who fought it not only punched it with all his power but collided against it with his shoulders and body. This method of exercise was in a measure similar to the jostling and shouldering opponents were expected to receive in a fight.

The first "fast ball" worthy of note, was the invention of the proprietor of a Cleveland gymnasium, named Professor Rumsby, who is credited with being Mark Hanna's teacher of sparring. This bag or ball was merely a rubber ball, about a foot in diameter enclosed in a canvas covering and suspended from the ceiling by a cord. The bottom of the ball was hung on a level with its user's shoulders, was fastened to the floor by a rubber strap, which was just loose enough to permit the ball to fly back about a foot when sharply hit and caused it to quickly rebound. This ball was a great improvement on its predecessor, for its use made a man much quicker in his movements. Its great defect was the fact that it had to be driven away directly in a line of the puncher's position or it would revolve in a circle and have to be stopped to be steadied.

The present form of punching ball is in its general construction, somewhat



akin to the football employed by our collegians in their games, only ordinary leather is used for the covering instead of pig skin. The ball is usually suspended from a ceiling, but where the ordinary ceiling is too high, a wooden disk about six or eight feet in diameter is used instead. This disk is mainly what makes the ball so useful. Ordinarily it is suspended from the regular ceiling by strong iron rods, so that it forms a pseudo-ceiling about eight or nine feet above the floor. The cord suspending the ball can be raised or lowered so that the center of the ball can be brought as the puncher may desire, to the level of either his chin or shoulders. Generally the cord is attached to the ball by a metal swivel, which permits it to revolve longitudinally should it not be struck fairly.

John L. Sullivan was the first pugilist of note to use the present form of ball in his training. A few days before he fought Paddy Ryan for the championship of America, at Mississippi City, he gave an exhibition of ball punching in his training quarters at Carrollton, above New Orleans, that amazed and delighted his friends. His

last blow burst the ball, and as it collapsed, Arthur Chambers exclaimed, "John, if I see you let go that way at Ryan, in the ring, I'll shut my eyes, for I don't want to see a man murdered."

Dominick McCaffrey was the first pugilist to give public exhibitions of ball punching. They were given in the Bowery museum when they did not meet with the hearty approval of the "toughs" of that famous thoroughfare. It was just after his four round contest with Charley Mitchell and he was frequently told by members of his "aw-jence," "Oh, yes! you kin punch a ball all right, but what about Charley Mitchell?"

One of the greatest exhibitions of ball punching ever witnessed was that given by Jim Corbett in Madison Square Garden, a few days before he started south to wrest the championship from John L. Sullivan. On that occasion the disk used on the stage was two feet, six inches above the top of his head and the center of the ball was just below his chin. Among other feats, that day, he fought the ball with both hands as rapidly as he could hit out, for three minutes, without cessation. Good judges estimated that he sent the ball against the disk not less than a hundred and twenty times each minute or three hundred and sixty times in all. The ball was blown up very tight and its resiliency was very great. Assuming that the ball traveled five feet each time it was struck, it went eighteen hundred feet in all, or about one-third of a mile. This was great speed when it is remembered that the ball changed direction two hundred and forty times a minute.

The four greatest ball punchers in the pugilistic profession are Tommy Ryan, Jim Corbett, Bob Fitzsimmons and young Griffo. Parson Davies claims that Ryan is the best of the lot and I am inclined to agree with him. Corbett makes ball punching one of the features of his theatrical entertainments. Bob Fitzsimmons alternates his fist blows with jabs with his elbows and he can make the ball fairly "ouch" each time he uses them on it. Griffo, too, is very good at this elbow work.

People who wish to punch the ball, as an exercise, should suspend it in a room which, while well ventilated, is free from drafts. They should strip to the waist and wear nothing but drawers and slippers. It is well to encase the hands in loose kid gloves, from which the fingers have been cut. This will prevent any abrasion of the knuckles, which is sometimes caused by glancing blows. One minute rounds are long enough for a beginner, with two minutes rest between each round. Plenty of good, coarse Turkish towels should be used to wipe off the perspiration caused by the exercise. Five rounds each day are enough for a beginner for the first few weeks. After



that, for the next fortnight the length of the rounds can be increased to two minutes. I would never advise lengthening the rounds beyond three minutes and care must be taken never to unduly tire one's self. After a bout with the ball the body should be wiped until thoroughly dry, then a quick sponge bath should be taken and if the puncher, after drying himself, will rub himself with witch hazel and alcohol and hand rub himself until he is perfectly dry, and then don clean underwear, he will go forth from the room not only lighter in body and heart than he was when he entered it but also wonderfully refreshed and invigorated.

J. B. (Bacon) McCormick.

DO THE WORK OF HORSES.

Japanese Men Haul Vehicles About the Roads and Streets.

From the Cleveland World.

One, if not the greatest, obstacle in the way of the industrial progress of Japan is the fact that upward of 1,000,000 of the most muscular of its population are engaged as beasts of burden. In this calculation I do not include those occupations in which the day laborers of all civilized countries are engaged. The statement is simply based on the fact that over 1,000,000 of the vigorous manhood are engaged in the transportation of people and commodities from place to place, performing the work which in Europe and America is done by animals, by steam, by electricity and other modern methods of conveyance. So tremendous is this drain upon the population of the empire that much of the other hard labor, such as loading coal on vessels, handling heavy freight on railways, the driving and loading of pack horses, heavy farm work and the like, is performed by women, who, dressed in tight blue cotton trousers and tunics, are compelled to do for Japan what the longhorns, yardmen and farm laborers do in the United States.

The estimate that over 1,000,000 men are engaged in the mikado's empire in these degrading occupations is based upon the fact that the returns of 1895 show a total of 199,411 jinrikishas and 914,830 hand carts. As all these carriages and carts are licensed, the returns are probably correct. In the case of the jinrikishas the number of pullers and pushers is greatly in excess of the number of vehicles. This comes from the fact that some of the vehicles have two men, and because in large cities the same vehicle is rented out during the twenty-four hours to two different men. It is safe to assume that nearly 250,000 coolies are directly and indirectly engaged as pullers and pushers of these conveyances. As for carts, the same holds true. They are propelled by enormous loads, sometimes by two bent and wrinkled old men, sometimes by one strong and hearty young man of low intelligence, and sometime by mere boys, from 10 to 15 years of age. One million, therefore, would seem to be within the mark. This gives us a total of 1,250,000 human horses.

To the ordinary observer, these jinrikishas seem a novel and delightful experience. They combine all the joys of a human horse. They help you into

the carriage, hand you your parasol or umbrella, kick the rug around you, and land you at the door of the shop or house. Moreover, they take care of your parcels. In rainy weather they pull up the hood and fasten the oil-cloth in front, so that nothing but a peep-hole is left, and you are safe from the wet and mud. All you see is the bare legs of the hedgehog-looking creature who, covered with a peculiar hat and coat of a reedy grass, is rushing onward through slush and snow and sleet and rain. This is well enough for the passenger within, but what are the effects of the occupation upon the man without? What is the effect of the employment of 1,250,000 of the robust men of Japan in this way and in the hauling of carts upon the rest of the population? These are questions that must be carefully weighed in any estimate of the future industrial importance of Japan.

End of the World.

In these latter days, says the New York Herald, there is nothing so extraordinary as the recrudescence of old superstitions in skeptical France. What with appearing archangels and Madonnas and disappearing devils, the Gallic intellect has been kept in a ferment of excitement. And now comes a new disturbing element in the shape of two prophecies foretelling the end of the world in 1899. In these prophecies religion and science go hand in hand. One was made over three centuries ago by Philippe Olivierus of the Abbey of Citeaux, who had in his day, so we are told, "a great reputation for perspicacity." He began by the general prediction that in the year 1896 Paris would be blotted out, never to reappear; that many great cities would be burned, and that the end of all things would be three years later. The other prophecy is by Professor Faib of Vienna, who has achieved a reputation throughout Europe through his successful forewarnings of the earthquakes of 1855 in Zante and in Southern Hungary. He now asserts that on November 13, 1899, that heavenly wanderer known as the comet of 1865 will appear and collide with the earth, smashing it into atoms. It would seem, therefore, that now is the time to order your ascension robe if you wish to be early and avoid the rush.

Mrs. Gazzam—Why is the ringing of a bell made obligatory upon bicycle riders? Mr. Gazzam—It gives their victims time to make an ejaculatory prayer.—New York Truth.

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A Railroad Official's Experience.



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